Proposed Procedure to Implement a Locally-Led Watershed Based Approach

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Rationale for Locally Led

- Develop implementable projects
- Demonstrate that funding under existing programs can be used more effectively by selecting, planning, and implementing relatively small pilot watershed projects that:

Selection Criteria (Cont'd)

- Are identified by agricultural interests (agricultural watersheds) and others such as state environmental agencies
- Represent different eco-regions and consider the activities of other entities needed to achieve water quality

Include Other Watershed Concerns

- Wetlands
- Degradation of fish and wildlife habitat
- Lack of riparian corridors
- Lowered water quantity
- Lowered air quality
- Carbon sequestration
- Others concerns should be considered where feasible

Selection Criteria (Cont'd)

- Are on the Clean Water Act, Section 303(d) list and are impaired by phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment or other agriculturally related pollutants
- Include separable impairments stemming from a variety of other sources including point and urban, rural, and non-agricultural nonpoint

Selection Criteria (Cont'd)

- Are no larger than the 14 digit HUC scale
- Have leadership interested in the locally-led and incentive-based non-regulatory approach which could include nutrient trading

Selection Criteria (Cont'd)

- Have vigorous local sponsors whose goal is to have the 303(d) listed streams removed from their state list in the period of time specified in their implementation plan

- Have elected officials who are supportive and understand that funds have to be allocated for goal setting, plan development, implementation, and measuring of accomplishments and effects

Develop Watershed Plans

- Develop comprehensive plans following:
  - a sound planning process
  - identifying measures to be implemented
  - period of time for implementation
  - operation and maintenance needed
  - supports monitoring and evaluation during the project life.

Develop Watershed Plans (Cont'd)

- Plan development would follow the watershed approach:
  - Inventory, assessment, and defining problem source areas based on BAT
  - Formulating and evaluating alternative systems of BMPs to meet load allocations
  - Identifying programs with authority to implement the selected treatments

Supporting the Approach - NRCS Planning Process

- NRCS planning process includes 9 steps grouped into 3 phases.

- Phase I includes 4 steps:

(1) Identify concerns and opportunities

(2) Determine objectives

(3) Inventory resources

(4) Analyze resource data.

Planning Process (Cont'd)

- Phase II includes:
  - (5) Formulate alternatives
  - (6) Evaluate alternatives
  - (7) Make decisions.
- Phase III includes:
  - (8) Implement the plan
  - (9) Evaluate the plan and adjust if needed.

High Level of Support

- Establish with elected officials and agency top administrators that:
  - These pilot projects would be viewed as paramount in importance.

High Level of Support (Cont'd)

- These would serve as laboratories where:
  - Monitoring data would be gathered and evaluated by scientists
  - Used to refine the science
  - Develop methodologies to better quantify resource condition
  - Determine the effects of treatments under real world situations.

High Level of Support (Cont'd)

- Follow adaptive management principles
- Modify existing knowledge base to guide the planning and implementation of other projects
- Improve the efficiency of programs
- Provide outcomes as required by GPRA and the Administrations Management Initiative

Local Leadership/Sponsorship

- Consist of:

  - Local organization (preferably subdivision of local government)

  - Willing to lead the watershed planning and implementation process

  - Willing to involve stakeholders through a public participation process

  - Elected officials are willing to support politically

Sponsorship in Agricultural Watersheds

- County/parish Soil and Water Conservation District will formally sponsor the planning effort
- The project may also be initiated and co-sponsored by a municipality, a county agency, or a group of concerned local citizens

Components of Structure

- The Locally Led Process normally includes:
  - Planning Committee
  - Technical Advisory Committee
  - Public

The Planning Committee

- Consists of a group of stakeholders normally drawn from:
  - Residents and/or landowners
  - Farm owners & operators
  - Local municipal officials
  - Business & industry representatives
  - Environmental & conservation groups
  - Other special interest representatives

Technical Advisory Committee

- Consist of subject area specialists from various public and private organizations
- Technical advisors work as an inter-disciplinary planning team to assist the Planning Committee
- Follows a planning process

Technical Committee Could Be a Dedicated Planning Staff

- Designate interagency interdisciplinary planning staffs
- Provide members the needed resources
- Certify that they are well trained as planners
- Can apply BAT
- Willing to refine and develop better technology and planning tools

Public Information & Involvement

- Consist of:
  - Participation meetings
  - Workshops
  - Public meetings
  - Newsletters
  - Other

Essential Characteristics

Unless these projects are legitimized through sponsors, they will not:

- Have staying power
- Unable to sustain the installed works over their planned life.

(Role of Local Watershed Coordinator)

Essential Characteristics – Implementation Staffs

- The same approach listed in item 4 should be used for plan implementation
- Every agency that has a role in plan implementation should also furnish staff to develop the plan.

Conclusion

- Demonstrate that Locally Watershed Approach can work
- Selecting pilot/ showcase/ demonstration projects
- Follow the planning and implementation process
- Success builds on success:
  - Using existing funds to demonstrate
  - Use successes to build support for an initiative

LETS DO IT!